

12 Growth of the Humanist Movement.

Salutati, Chancellor of Florence. Yet progress was but gradual. The new culture did not immediately capture, as it did not emanate from, the schools. But it succeeded in enlisting the sympathy of generous patrons like Cosimo and Lorenzo de Medici, in the principal Italian cities, and it derived a powerful impulse from those wandering Greek scholars for whom they provided a career as teachers of Greek at Rome or Florence, Perugia or Padua, Ferrara or Venice. Fully half a century before the fall of Constantinople the first of these famous exponents of Greek culture, Chryso-loras, began to teach at Florence. Others soon followed, and the pressure of the Turkish inroad into the Byzantine Empire speedily increased the number. George of Trebizond, Theodore Gaza, Plethon, Argyropoulos, Chalcondylas, John Lascaris, roused by their lectures the enthusiasm of crowds of students. Italians whom they had inspired or taught ere long appeared to emulate or eclipse their fame. Such were Filelfo and Politian, who at Florence, in the first and the second half of the fifteenth century respectively, fired students from many lands (Reuchlin, Grocyn, Linacre among them) with the spirit of the classics, as well as commented on their contents. The collector enriched the movement by the zeal of discovery, and the manuscripts of precious books whose very names had been forgotten were brought from Constantinople, or recovered from the dusty recesses of the monastic libraries. Its diffusion was immeasurably benefited by the printing press, notably that of Aldo Manuzio at Venice, and by the libraries which the collector and the printer made possible. The academies or literary associations which sprang up at Florence, Rome, Naples, Venice, gave it a corporate organisation, and contributed powerfully to its triumph. That triumph is evidenced by the fact that, in spite of the opposition of the monks, it captured not only the universities, but the Church itself. Popes like Nicolas V. and Leo X. became its ardent patrons. "We have been accustomed," wrote Leo in the brief conferring the papal privilege on Beroaldo's edition of the "Annals of Tacitus," "even from our early years to think that nothing more excellent or more useful has been given by the Creator to mankind, if we except only the knowledge and true worship of